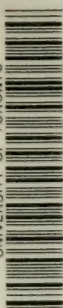


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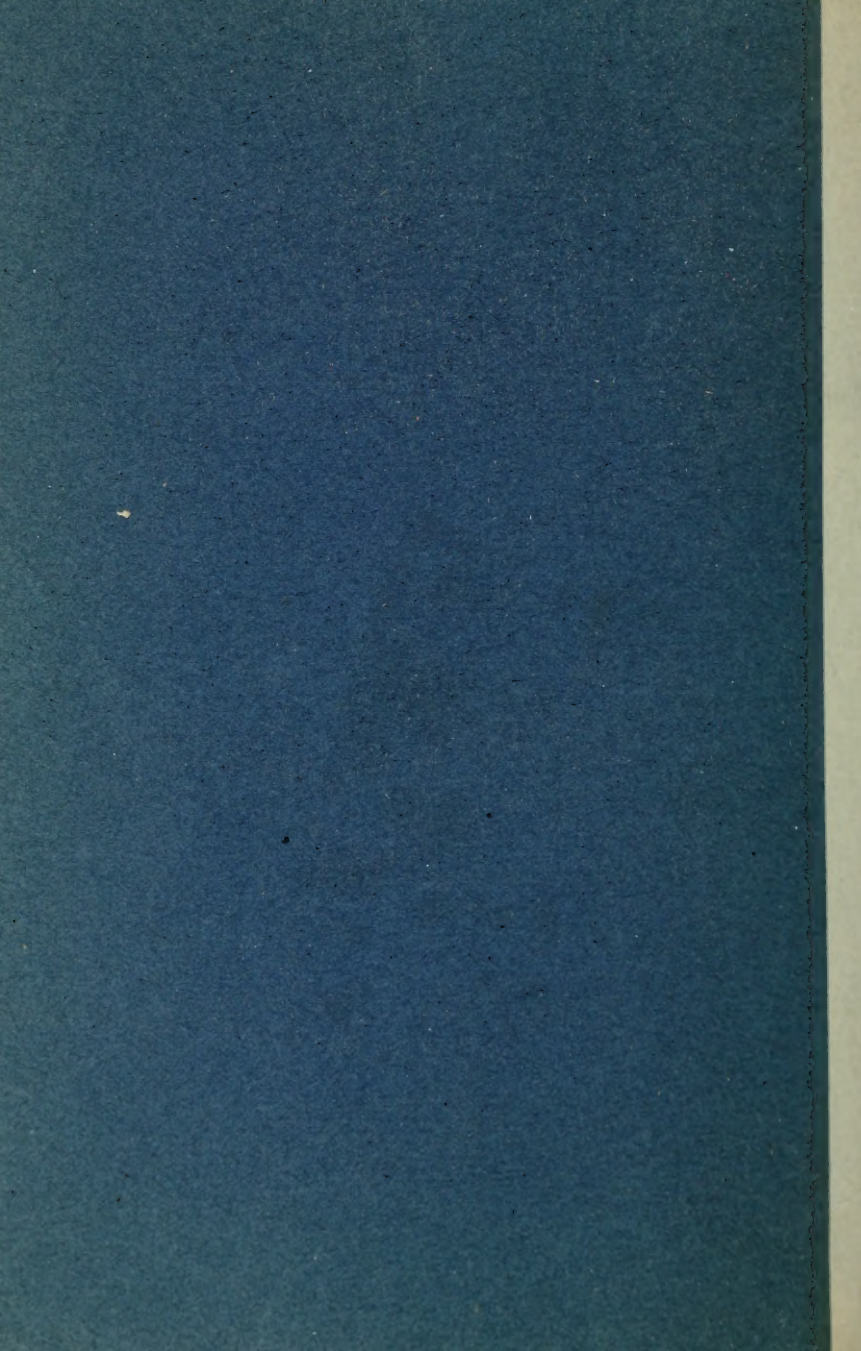
# KOSSUTH

*The Forgotten Leader*

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ALEXANDER KONTA





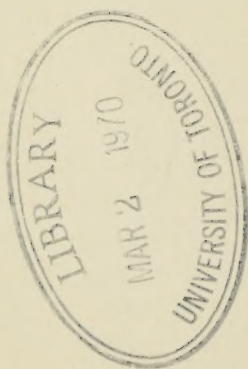
# KOSSUTH

*The Forgotten Leader*

*Address delivered in New York  
January 10th, 1922*

*By*  
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# KOSSUTH

## *The Forgotten Leader*

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### I

IN this address—with your kind indulgence—I shall deal somewhat briefly with the actual career of the great Hungarian patriot and statesman, Louis Kossuth. There is no occasion for a detailed account of deeds which gave him an undying place in Hungarian history. Those deeds might be summarized in two words—Hungarian Nationality. How, after a long and tempestuous struggle against oppositions that would have broken the soul of a smaller man, and how, after a brief moment of triumph, he witnessed, with a breaking heart, the downfall of the structure he had reared, is known to all familiar with the history of continental Europe in the nineteenth century.



It was through no fault of Kossuth that the structure fell. Circumstances against which no man—even a superman—could have fought successfully, were against him. Kossuth, in his rise to greatness, lifted his nation to a glorious height. Then he fell with it—a splendid failure, and eventually died in exile, far from the land which had given him birth and on which he had left the ineffaceable impress of his political genius.

*“Kossuth and What He Stood For”* might have been chosen as the title of this address. After all, it is not the man himself, but what he stands for, that counts. It is of small importance to know that Kossuth was born in 1802 and died in 1895. It is of more importance to know that, during his long life of ninety-three years, he gave devoted service to a great ideal, and more than, possibly, any other leader of his period in Europe, contributed to the progress of the democratic movement. Kossuth was the spokesman of democracy, the valiant standard-bearer of a people in quest of political freedom. But he was something more than that. He was a dreamer of practicable ideas. He was a seer—not a visionary, but a man of vision. In his dreams of a future for his country, based on the impregnable foundations of liberty and justice, Kossuth was in advance of his time. And Time—that impassionate, calm, and impartial tester of all truth—has affirmed



that Kossuth saw well and dreamed well. More accurately than was realized by his contemporaries, Kossuth pointed out the probable course of history. He foretold the evil results which would follow the suppression of democracies and democratic aspirations. In a word, Louis Kossuth was the very embodiment of liberty, the dauntless protagonist of popular rights, and, in many senses, the most progressive political figure of his century.

Kossuth was a radical, in an era of intense conservatism. Curiously, though, he was not of the stuff of which radicals are usually made. By birth he was of the nobility. Yet—and here is the explanation—he belonged to that class which, although it owns a title, yet has to work for its daily bread. Kossuth labored, like you or me, with his hands and head for what he got out of life. He belonged to the privileged class, yet, throughout his life, we find him fighting privilege. Even in his student days, when training himself for the law, we note his impatience with conservatism. Later, when, like the legal class in general, he engages in politics, we observe him fighting against illiberalism and reaction. This attitude he maintains throughout his career.

What, we may ask, was Hungary like in the '30's, when Louis Kossuth began to think and dream? Briefly, it was a country just emerging

from medievalism. True, there had been an awakening—a protest against the methods and evils of feudalism. Under the inspiring influence of Count Stephen Szechenyi, Hungary, for centuries buffeted by misfortune, and now the vassal of a detested Austria, was slowly sensing her inner force. She was responding, perhaps unwittingly, to the democratic movement which had already started in France and America. She was rousing herself to the need of preserving her own economic and intellectual interests. She had even begun to preserve a national language. And, in numerous ways, had given warning that, to her freedom-loving people, the old systems were dead—that the popular pulse was athrob with a newer and grander life.

Hungary had long been under Austrian rule. Her King, wearing the ancient and holy crown of St. Stephen, was a Hapsburg. Her laws were given to her by Vienna. Her aristocracy was pro-Austrian. German was the language generally spoken. And the old regime, of course, was hostile to the new movement. The aristocracy—spokesmen of the old feudalism—fought all reforms tooth and nail. They held the people down—for the people had no vote. Previous to 1825, the country had been ruled in the most arbitrary manner. The Constitution was flouted. Monstrous taxes were laid upon the people. Free

speech and a free press were denied them. All these, and more, were obvious wrongs waiting to be set right. It is small wonder, therefore, that Kossuth, growing up under a governmental system violently administered, should resent oppression, and become restive. The situation was no more satisfactory to him than it was to other Hungarian patriots who, in response to Szechenyi's advice, were thinking less of the glories of Hungary's past than of the glories to come, in a more liberal and progressive present and future.

One step which Kossuth took went far towards releasing Hungary from her shackles. This was the emancipation of the serfdom. Another was his noble effort for a free press. At this period (1832) the newspapers were not permitted to print reports of the deliberations of the Diet, although the Deputies continually urged such publication. Kossuth discovered that the censorship covered printed matter only, and ingeniously evaded the censors by writing out the reports of the Diet's proceedings with his own hand. Manuscript copies of these were then made and circulated throughout the country, arousing intense interest and welding together the people against the ruling powers. The Austrian government, becoming worried, tried first to bribe Kossuth and, failing in this, proscribed his manuscript newspaper and broke up his plant. Kossuth retorted by



starting a new paper in Budapest, which printed reports of the doings of the county assemblies, and thus enormously strengthened the union between the various sections of the country. Kossuth's act again exasperated the government, and the publication of the paper was prohibited. But the paper continued, and the opposition to the authorities increased. Finally, as Vambery tells us, the Government "resorted to the most bare-faced brutality. Kossuth, the brave champion of liberty, its eloquent pen and herald, was dragged to a damp and dark subterranean prison-cell in the castle of Buda, and detained there, whilst his father and mother and family, who were looking to him solely for their support, were robbed of the aid of their natural protector."

You get, from this picture, a rather vivid glimpse of the times. Also a strong impression of Kossuth, the man, and his character. He was a fighter—prepared to suffer in a great cause. And, eventually, he suffered deeply. For he was convicted of high treason, and sentenced to imprisonment for three years. During his incarceration, he devoted himself to important studies and, incidentally, learned the English language—a fact of some significance, as we shall later see.

[ All this struggle for a free press was but a sign of that sullen and widespread discontent among

the Hungarian masses against enforced subservience to Hapsburg dominion which was rapidly coalescing. The people were looking forward to a deliverance from their troubles. Unexpectedly, this moment arrived with the news of the revolution in France in February 1848. A fire had been set alight which spread through Europe, Kosuth was then 46, at the peak of his abilities, the avowed champion of Hungarian liberties. Quickly divining that the great moment had come, he sprang to the forefront in the fray. Behind him were the masses singing the inspiring words of Petofi's immortal war-song:

"Arise, O Magyar! Thy country calls,  
Here is the time—now or never.  
Shall we be slaves or free?  
That is the question—choose!  
We swear, by the God of the Magyars,  
We swear, to be slaves no longer!"

It was indeed the time—then or never—to break the shackles which held Hungarian aspirations in bondage. But, as yet, there was no actual armed conflict between Austria and Hungary. The pressure exerted upon the Government by the liberals, aided by such circumstances as a popular rising in Vienna, brought concessions which were temporarily satisfactory. Certain reforms, including the freedom of the press, were gained. Hungary was acknowledged by

Austria to be a separate State. Old-time privileges were abolished, the land was given back to the people and free right of religious worship was established. All these concessions, won without the shedding of blood, were among those sought and fought for by Kossuth, who, when the government of the new Hungarian nation was formed, naturally became its moving force, and, as Minister of Finance, the economic re-constructor of the country.

Unhappily for the dreams of the liberal patriots, opposition raised its head. The party of privilege, pro-Austrian in spirit and deed, still possessed power to make mischief. Austria lent a willing hand. Racial animosities were fanned into flame. And, at the very commencement of their new national life, the patriots were forced to fight for their newly-won rights.

It would be vain to attempt here a detailed record of the cruel war which followed. The defence of the country was organized by Kossuth with an intelligence that proclaimed his genius. The struggle for Hungarian liberty aroused the admiration of the world, and made the name of Kossuth universally known. After a series of catastrophes and successes, the Hungarian armies finally stood, as it were, at the very gates of Vienna. Success was theirs.

THEN—at the hour of triumph, fell a stunning



blow. Russia intervened in behalf of Austria. The great imperialistic Slav power of the North, fearful of the success of little Hungary, threw its armies into the field in support of the Hapsburgs. It was the death-knell of Hungarian hopes. In a brief while the gallant armies of Hungary surrendered. The government fell to pieces. And Kossuth and his brave colleagues—most of them never to return to their native land—fled to Turkey.

Thus, through no fault of Kossuth's as I have said, the structure fell. In its place grew up a hatred and fear of Russia which lasted right up to the beginning of the world-war. Eventually, by compromise and Austrian concessions, grew up that Hungary which we knew before the war. It was part of the so-called Dual Monarchy, established in 1867 by what is known as the "Ausgleich" or Compromise, under which the late Emperor Francis Joseph became King of Hungary and to Austria was reserved the control of the Hungarian Army and Hungarian foreign relations. It was this combined Austria and Hungary—the one willingly, and the other because she could not help herself—that fought on the side of Germany in 1914.

In his exile, Kossuth was even greater than in his brief day of power. At least, the world paid him a tribute which bespoke his greatness.

Through the intercession of America, he was eventually released from his Turkish dungeon, and, in 1851, paid a visit, by way of England, to the United States. In England he was received with plaudits and honor. But his reception there was as nothing in enthusiasm compared with that which greeted him upon his arrival at Staten Island. Kossuth's exploits, his splendid failure, his sufferings, his marvellous oratory—news of these had prepared the American public in advance, and throughout the length and breadth of America the fame of Louis Kossuth increased amazingly as he traveled from city to city. There are old men amongst us today who recall with a thrill the touch of Kossuth's hand, the golden utterances of his voice. Senator Depew has told us that he never missed an occasion to hear Kossuth speak, to learn from him the hidden treasures of the English language. "The grasp of his hand," he says, "the magnetic look in his eyes, ran like an electric shock through my body." And some of the old men will still show you, among their treasures, the Kossuth hat with its picturesque feather copied from the one which Kossuth wore when he landed here and was promptly adopted as a style throughout the country. This little fact alone suggests the furore created by the visit of the great Hungarian patriot.

Nothing could better prove the transcendent

power and appeal of Kossuth's oratory than the tributes paid to it by the greatest Englishmen and Americans. It is no exaggeration to say that the Anglo-Saxon peoples woke up with astonishment to find amongst them a foreigner speaking their own tongue with splendid purity of diction. Kossuth was a master of the English language, of all its fervor, humor, sententiousness and pathos. When it is added that he was a man of the finest culture, it will be believed that the appeal of his oratory was indeed irresistible, even though the specific appeal for which he came to America to make failed of success. Kossuth wished America to intervene in behalf of his distressed country. The effort failed because of political reasons then guiding American policy. But the language in which the impassioned plea was made impressed unforgettably the hearts of the American people.

Where did Kossuth acquire his marvellous control of the English language? Well, the answer is comparatively simple. He derived his English from the Bible and from Shakespeare. During his prison life, and in his Turkish exile, he studied laboriously. He drank deeply from the great springs of English style, and absorbed their spirit. But the great unhidden springs which generated in him those marvellous



speeches of his, so eloquently rendered in an alien tongue, were his own unselfish patriotism and boundless love of his nation.

But he was something more than a mere orator. He was, as I have said before, a man of vision, a dreamer of practicable dreams. John Bright once said of him in the House of Commons: "Kossuth's prophetic utterances are sounding like the soothsayers of ancient times, or as if we were reading the history of bygone times, and not the presentiment of the future." Cobden wrote of him: "Kossuth is certainly a phenomenon; not only is he the first orator of the age, but he combines the rare attributes of a first-class administrator, high moral qualities and unswerving courage. This is more than can be said of Demosthenes!"

Such then, was the man whose long life was an inspiration to every true lover of liberty. Such was the man whose brief hour of accomplishment and triumph was followed by years of disappointments and deprivations. Such was the man whose name stands highest on the long scroll of Hungarian heroes. Vale! Kossuth Lajos! Thy name shalt ever be graven in the memory of the Hungarian people!

## II

It is time now to consider a few of the practical aspects of Kossuth's labors. In other words, to apply a test to his acts and prophecies. In what way, we may fitly ask, were his dreams proved true? Wherein was his presentment of the future correct? What would have happened had his warnings been observed? And what has happened because they were not observed? These questions are surely pertinent. By the answers to them must Kossuth's lifework be judged, and—as time goes on—his reputation rise or fall.

I approach this part of my subject with a confidence based upon historic fact. The answers to the question I have asked may be found not only in Kossuth's attitude on the relations between Hungary and Austria, and in his general foreign policy, but also in the events of very recent times.

It may be affirmed at once that Kossuth's attitude towards Austria and the ruling Hapsburgs was never in question. He detested them both, with his very soul. He approved the deposition of the Hapsburgs from the Hungarian throne. And, under his leadership, as I have pointed out,

and because of an irresistible republican force behind him, the Hapsburgs were finally deposed when the declaration of the independence of the Hungarian nation was proclaimed in 1849. Up in the New York Public Library you can see a copy of that declaration, signed by certain refugees who came to America after the tragic ending of the Hungarian struggle for freedom. "The provinces of the Hungarian Crown" says this document, "never belonged to the House of Hapsburg, because the King can never be its feudal or hereditary sovereign . . . We will never give up a cause which affects the freedom and independence of all nations." And Kossuth himself, when he wrote, in May 1851, from the internment camp in Asia Minor, his memorable letter to President Fillmore, said:

" . . . That house of Hapsburg whose reign over Hungary was but a continual series of perjuries. I was weak enough to trust their sworn promises to be faithful and righteous to my land; so, by an excess of loyalty, it is three years ago that I have saved the House of Austria when every corner of its power was tottering, and it was given by the Almighty God in my humble hands to blow it asunder like a handful of chaff."

"Your Excellency knows," continues Kossuth, "how they answered me. Resuming the hereditary design to deprive Hungary of its self-consistency, its constitutional life, and its national character, they commenced by a new perjury and by a bloody civil war, pursued by aggression and finished by treason and Russian arms the oppression of my fatherland."



It is clear from this that Kossuth's detestation of Austria and the Hapsburgs was deep-seated. And it was through his experiences with the Hapsburgs that he learned a lesson which he never after failed to preach with force to the world. Kossuth, during the many years following his release from exile, never ceased to warn the nations of the earth of the danger that beset Europe and the rest of the civilized peoples, if such usurpation of power on the part of Austria was tolerated.

In the light of recent history, was Kossuth right? Was Austria a menace to Europe after 1849? Were not the Hapsburgs the great trouble-breeders on the Continent? Were not their political methods the mainsprings of innumerable menaces to peace? What of the Balkan wars? What of Bosnia-Herzegovina? And was not the history of Austria, up to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914 provocative of European disturbance, to say nothing of the world-conflict which later ensued?

It seems to me that Kossuth's attitude towards Austria was amply justified, and his predictions borne out by our recent past. He looked upon the Hapsburgs as promise-breakers and perjurers. And history has only too recently confirmed Kossuth. I have no doubt that while I have been dealing with the past, your active minds have

been making a quick leap to the present time. You have been thinking of the late Emperor Charles of Austria and his unsuccessful efforts to regain the throne of Hungary. You will remember that when he took refuge in Switzerland he pledged his word to the Swiss authorities to make no effort to escape or to cause trouble. Well, how did he keep his word? He broke it—and broke it twice. He is a Hapsburg. He deliberately threw to the winds his sworn obligation, and left upon his reputation a stain which cannot be wiped out. No matter how we may feel regarding the rightfulness of his claim to the Hungarian throne—and the claim is a rightful one—we must condemn him for his breach of truth. No matter how brave was his attempt, by means of a perilous journey in the air, to enter Hungary—and it *was* a brave effort—we must perforce class him amongst those who regard honor as of less importance than self-interest, and who try to gain their ends by dishonorable methods. At all events, this is the way that the world looked upon the latest exploits of the latest Hapsburg, and I dare say you will agree that the world is right.

The foreign policy of Kossuth was largely concerned with Hungary in its relations with Russia. Russia, with its growing strength, had always been a menace to Hungary. It seemed to Kos-

1849-1850  
Kossuth that the security and future of Hungary could only be secured by the reduction of Russian power. Logically and naturally therefore, he advocated the restoration of Poland—an event which, as you know, the great war has brought about. Kossuth believed that the definite solution of the then troublesome Eastern question lay in the independence of Poland and a free Hungary. As he once said in England: "England needs Poland and Hungary more than those countries need England." But the fundamental reason for Kossuth's antagonism to Russia was the Russian policy of substituting race for nationality. "Slavonic Europe"—that was, for many years, the Russian slogan, the mere mention of which used to send a shiver along the spines of European statesmen. Kossuth didn't want a Slav-ized Europe. He dreaded the advancing foot-fall of the great Bear upon the continental map. And he tried bravely to stop its lumbering progress.

Kossuth, indeed, had good reason—as did the statesmen after him—to fear Russia. He not only feared, but he hated Russia. It was Russian intervention in the Austrian cause which, in 1849, took away the independence of his country. In later years, with pen and speech, he fought hard against the foolish doctrine that an understanding between Hungary and Austria meant

security of Hungary against Russia. "They told thee, Hungary!" said Kossuth, "Be reconciled with Austria that thou mayest be safe from the Russian. Thou hast been reconciled: let us see the conciliator. Where is he?" This was spoken after the Compromise of 1867, which, Kossuth affirmed, would sooner or later lead Hungary to destruction and carry her with Austria down into the maelstrom. "Mene! Mene! Tekel! Upharsin!" he cried, "This vampire sits on your bed, on your chest, on your arms. Shake off the vampire, I say! Free your arms, and step at the head of the nation!"

Kossuth hoped that England and America would aid his country to throw off the vampire. But the hope was vain. England and America, for different reasons, were disinterested or ineffective, and Hungary, tied up with Austria, eventually went down with her in the maelstrom. How prophetically, then, read those other memorable words of the great patriot:

"Some years ago," wrote Kossuth, "when my country was standing at a fatal turning-point in its destinies, my voice—the voice of one who crieth in the wilderness—admonished the leaders of the country in these very words: 'Beware how you push the nation towards surrendering her independence, by telling her that she wanted Austria, to be safe from Russia' . . . Well, they were fettered! Austria is a weakness, not a strength, to Hungary! And, at this moment I recall to memory those other words of mine: 'The traditional policy of the Cabinet of Vienna will make of Hungary a funeral pile.'"



What foresight had this man! Another proof of it may be found in Kossuth's attitude upon the question of the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Kossuth opposed that annexation as against Magyar policy. Yet Austria, in 1908, took the fateful step. We all know that this forcible annexation of territory by Austria was one of the main events of a stupid statecraft leading directly to the outbreak of the world-war.

In connection with this, let me pause for a moment to indulge in a little reminiscence. I happened to be in Vienna when the annexation of Bosnia - Herzegovina was under discussion. Baron d'Aehrenthal, an able administrator, was then in charge of the foreign affairs of the Dual Monarchy, and was responsible for the pre-war foreign policy of Austria. I was permitted to have a conversation with d'Aehrenthal, in which I pointed out to him that the world would resent the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Austrian realm, and that war would sooner or later result. It did not require any great perspicacity on my part to foresee this result. The great Kossuth had foreseen it over half a century previously!

Another brilliant example of Kossuth's prescience is to be found in his advocacy of a Federation of the Danubian States. In recent days, since the débâcle in Central Europe, there has

been much discussion of a Federated Danubian State. It has been suggested that those countries through which the river Danube flows—countries which, because of that fact, have common commercial and political interests should unite for their common protection against aggression, and economically as well as politically. Such a State, with Hungary, by virtue of her geographical and industrial position, at the head of it, would, it is believed by many, prove the strongest possible guarantee for the future peace of Central Europe. It would be a powerful bulwark against Russian aggression, or against attack from the East or West. This conception of a Danube Federation is indeed a splendid one, and is worthy of all the attention now being bestowed upon it by some of our progressive statesmen. In fact, I believe it would be the solution of the almost insuperable difficulties which beset that region of Europe. But why should the proposal be now advanced and considered as a novelty? Kossuth thought it all out, and proposed it, years ago. "Hungary," he said, "cannot think of conquest, of expansion. Its ethnographic conditions prohibit this. It would be sadness to think of it—suicide. This gives the key to the following call of the Hungarian nation to its neighbors: 'Great powers are around us. Let us form an alliance, thus protecting each other, safeguard

our independence. Look at the map and you will see that such combination is only possible with an independent Hungary. Without it this is impossible. Yet this combination is in the interest of Europe. This is the necessity of the future liberty and independence of Europe, yea, its imperative postulatam, because it is the only way to solve the Eastern question in the interest of the freedom of all peoples, otherwise the witches' cauldron of murderous competition remains, continuing to boil seething dangers to Europe. I am strongly convinced,' continues Kossuth, 'that the confederation of the smaller nations of the valley of the Danube is a commanding demand of the logic of history.' "

It may well be that, if this Danubian Federation could have been formed during Kossuth's life-time, it might have proved a boon to a disturbed Europe. We cannot tell. There were so many contributory causes of the world-war that it is almost impossible to put one's finger upon the exact cause that set the witches' cauldron ablaze. Some wise students of history have held that the world-war would never have happened had England and America, in 1849, prevented the intervention of Russia in the Hungarian-Austrian conflict. By shutting their eyes to Hungary's need, England and America, it is asserted, sealed the fate of Europe. Perhaps. We do not know.

Anyway, it is a bold generalization, and, in the absence of any single definite cause that we know of, it is as good as any. Kossuth, at any rate, held this belief. Had his appeals been heeded, Hungary certainly would not have become tacked to the Austrian skirt, would not have trailed in the wake of Germany, and would not have been dragged disastrously into the terrible catastrophe of 1914.

Hungary has emerged from the world-war with her independence. She is rid of Austria—let us hope—forever. That part of Kossuth's great dream has been realized. But—alas! the rest! I can see the fine and noble figure of Louis Kossuth rising from his resting-place and gazing, with tear-dimmed eyes, upon the wreckage of his beloved land. What does he find? A country shorn territorially of much of its former greatness. He sees the cruel results of the Trianon Treaty, a land full of dissensions and bitter-nesses, a skeleton from which the bleeding flesh has been torn by claws of self-interest and greed. He finds his people still proud in their sufferings. But their independence, theoretically a fact, is in reality an illusion. Hungary at this moment doesn't even possess the power to say what form of government it shall have or who its ruler shall be. For the time being, Hungary is impotent against allied action, in case its own action should



not accord with the wishes of the allies. Kosuth sees all this, as he surveys the havocs of war. He would be pleased, no doubt that Austrian power had been broken, that the dominions of Hungary's ancient foe and oppressor had been shattered. He would be glad that the Hapsburgs had been ousted. He would take joy in the fact that the claws of the Bear had been clipped and that for a long period the Russian menace to Europe had been removed. But these pleasant reflections would quickly give way to despair. Instead of a united people—united by that indomitable courage which has ever united Hungary in the hour of woe—he would find his beloved country the prey of reactionary minds and methods, split up into opportunist factions, and wasting their energies in petty political quarrels. He would find no master-mind among his countrymen, rallying them, as with a bugle-call, to the upholding of the great ideals of the past. Instead he would discover little groups quarreling among themselves as to who should be king, and others quarreling as to whether there should be a king at all. And, in that noble voice of his, he would doubtless cry out to these: "Ye are not men moulded of the stern and ancient stuff. Ye are but little Hungarians in your petty plots and time-servings. What boots it if ye have kingdom or republic, so long as ye never again traffic with

the Hapsburgs. What matters it that, for the moment—this year and next and next—the inviolability of Hungary's thousand-year old and inviolable territory and nationality, has been violated. The Hungarian nation still lives. And, when ye have settled down to build up on the foundation laid by your fathers then shall History amend the wrongs committed in its name!"

The present position in Hungary, is, in fact, so unsettled, that, unless an earnest attempt is made to accept existing conditions as momentarily unalterable, the future of the country is fraught with danger. Any careful observer will agree that a people so monstrously treated, as the Hungarians have been, by the treaty-makers—people who have witnessed the carving-up of their time-honored domain—will hardly be patient until some re-arrangement on the old basis is considered. The Transylvanian problem, with its legacy of cruelties to Hungarian peoples separated by force from the mother-state, is less of a problem than a festering sore. It will take the best effort of European statesmen, including that of the Hungarian leaders and people, to ameliorate this particular condition and to work a permanent cure.

It may be added here that, regarding the current monarchical agitation, the thousand-year old unity of Hungary has been maintained legally

and sentimentally by the idea of the Holy Crown. This connotes the King and the Nation together. The unity of Crown and People is the traditional universal belief of all Hungarians. In other words, they believe that from the Holy Crown of St. Stephen the institution of the King is inseparable, and that any insult against the person of the anointed King is an insult against the Holy Crown. This point is not always understood by the western peoples, and its exposition here may be of value in connection with the present agitation in Hungary.

All the political parties in Hungary agree that the Kingdom can only be a constitutional, national Hungarian Kingdom. There exists, however, among these parties, various shades of opinion. In the Assembly at Budapest, the party composed of the small farmers stands for the free election of a King. They not only desire a national constitutional kingdom, but a democratic kingdom. The majority of this party are against the claims of the recently-dethroned King Charles. Among these are some who desire a personal union with the present King of Serbia. And it is known that a prominent member of the British diplomatic circle at Budapest—an intimate friend of the present Serbian King—is in favor of that union. Still another party desires an understanding with Italy.

Most of the Catholic parties are legitimist. But, among them, there are strong differences of opinion. The majority hope for a return to power of the exiled Charles. Others are in favor of the Archduke Joseph, a Hapsburg who is popular in Hungary because he was born and grew up in Hungary. Others again favor the Archduke Albert, a young son of the Archduke Frederic. To the first-mentioned group, which is undoubtedly the strongest, is attached the so-called liberal opposition, the successors of that great party of which the late Count Tisza was head.

The entire Catholic clergy is working in the interests of the exiled Charles. This is an important fact, because sixty-five per cent of the population of Hungary is Catholic. But—and this fact is likewise significant—forty-eight per cent of the population are agriculturalists and are aligned with the small landed proprietors in opposition to Charles. An election is to be held in Hungary next month. The king question is to be settled at this election. And there is intense political activity throughout the country. The outcome, of course, is rather uncertain, because of the factors which I have just mentioned.

Such, then, is the position in which Hungary finds herself at the beginning of this momentous year. It is a position not without some gratifying aspects. A peace has just been arranged be-



tween Hungary and the United States which should mark the commencement of a new and vigorous life for Hungary, founded, as it is, on that old-time friendship of America for Hungary which was born in the troubled forties, made strong by the honorable effort of Louis Kossuth, and kept alive by the men and women of Hungarian birth or extraction now resident in the United States. On this sure foundation Hungary can rear a lasting edifice of good will between the two great nations.

### III

And now, with your kind permission, I shall gather together a few concluding thoughts. In the main they are commonsense deductions from the historical conditions and facts which I have so superficially recalled. They are inspired largely by the life and labor of the great man whose portrait as hero and patriot I have so inadequately presented.

You will have noted, first of all, that I have made no effort to whitewash Hungary for her part in the world-war. There was no call for this. Hungary fought bravely, and loyally to her obligations, on Germany's side in that war. Hungary lost. That is all there is to it. *Vae victis!*

But the Hungary that lost was the Hungary of 1867, not the Hungary of 1848. That it was not the Hungary of 1848 was not her fault alone. At least sixty-five years before western statesmen realized it, Kossuth knew that the peace of the world required the destruction of Austria and the freedom of the subject-peoples. He hoped to find acceptance for his idea in the enlightened west—and failed. He himself failed again in 1859,

and his followers failed in 1898, and again as late as 1905. Every time, in fact, that Kossuth and his followers sought rapprochement with the west, the diplomats of the west joined together to conserve Austria and thrust Hungary back into the Austrian clutches.

Two generations ago, Kossuth realized something that is not fully realized even today—namely, that there can be no lasting peace in Europe unless the truly free peoples living on the path of the historic “Drang nach Osten” between Germany and the East form a confederation on the basis *suum cuique*. The very word “confederation” means a voluntary structure free from all pressure from within or from without, and free from pressure by one member of the confederation upon another. The *suum cuique* implies due respect for the rights of others. The expression “free peoples” connotes not an independent statehood but the right of each people to make effective its wishes without opposition from Kings or so-called “national politicians.” In other words, the will of all the people and none but the people, should prevail.

Kossuth's plan to reconcile the Danubian peoples—to join Magyar, Czech, Ruman and Yugo-Slav together in a defensive confederation against Austria was a practicable dream. Stranger things may happen than that the future will

bring a fulfilment, with certain modifications, of that dream.

By a strange turn of fate, the moment of Hungary's deliverance from the clutches of Austria was the very moment when Hungary's thousand-year old territory was hacked to pieces. Frankly, this dismemberment of a country which, during its long history, had varied little in size—a country, moreover, which had never attached territory to itself by forcible means—seemed to me indefensible. And the consequences of that act of the treaty-makers may prove serious, as I have hinted above. But, even with the position as it now regrettably is, I make bold to say that the re-establishment of a stable political and social condition in Hungary is of far more urgent importance than the re-establishment of Hungary's territorial integrity. Just as the fortune of arms, in 1919, caused the break-up of Hungary, so, at some future date, may the fortune of arms bring Hungary together again. On the other hand, in the same sense that it was impossible, in 1919, to stop the evolution of history and the break-up of Hungary, so it may not be impossible that Hungary may gain territory by a future war. Therefore, in wars and bloodshed, I can see no panacea for Hungary's ills. Neither could Kossuth. Wars are the playthings of princes, not of free peoples. If you permit free people to adjust their



grievances in a natural way, you won't have wars, but mutual understandings.

It must, however, be noted with some misgivings, that, in southern central Europe today, true government by free peoples is far from its full realization. A Hohenzollern speaks for Rumania, a King for the Jugo-Slavs, another for the Greeks. In Slovakia even, republic though it be, the principle of the consent of the governed is still a theory rather than a fact. And in Hungary, where an empty throne still awaits some wearer of St. Stephen's crown, it certainly cannot be said that the people are free in the sense that Kossuth would have desired. But I need offer no apology for a state of affairs, which, under God's care, will right itself in time. My topic was not Hungary, but Louis Kossuth, and the perspicacity of his genius. I have not lost faith in the ultimate triumph of democracy and democratic institutions, of full freedom for all peoples, in the cause of which great creed Louis Kossuth, the forgotten leader, so ably lived and gloriously died.





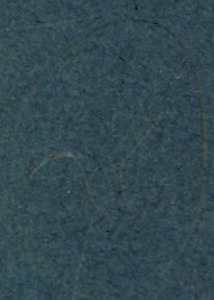
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Kossuth

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